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ABSTRACT

Robert Bloom considers the difficulties faced by teachers of disturbed and disruptive adolescents. He depicts common situations in which the teacher experiences anxiety, is unaware of the personal stress and conflict, and reacts in inappropriate ways. Examples portray such reactions as anger at coworkers, envy of the young, and retreat into professional neutrality. Reactions to Bloom's paper include thoughts by William Morse on the built in tension between adults and adolescents, a review by Michael Piersak of the importance of the adolescent feeling acceptance and security, a discussion of remedies by Virginia Rezmierski, and identification of other obstacles to teaching (such as changing federal, state, and local guidelines) by Ann and Thomas Vorhees. Bloom briefly responds to the reaction papers to conclude the discussion. (CL)

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IOWA PERSPECTIVE

News of Programs for Emotionally Disabled and Chronically Disruptive Students
Iowa Department of Public Instruction

April 1981

The Effects of Disturbed Adolescents on Their Teachers

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Currently, we are experiencing an intensive nationwide awakening of interest in the identification and education of emotionally disabled and chronically disruptive youngsters. These pages have chronicled the development of those concerns. Smith (1978) identified several major programming considerations; Fick (1979) described a contingency management system for teaching self-control; and most recently, Rich (1980) presented the elements of a system for matching conceptual models of variance and their attendant intervention strategies with the characteristics of the emotionally disturbed students we would serve. More and more, we are becoming aware of the resources necessary for teaching these students. We have specially designed buildings and classrooms, materials, techniques, curricula, and IEPs. But, as Fritz Redl often noted, what we often forget is that we also have ourselves. "If I teach a bunch of kids, I have to figure on me. What happens within me while those kids are around may have as much influence as the teaching material, the action of one student or another, and the rest of the environment."

As Rhodes (1979) has said of healing, teaching emotionally disturbed adolescents depends upon knowing "where our heads are". "We would not be human and could not relate to our students if we didn't react and have and show emotions". (Redl) Who among us has not found themselves elated or depressed, excited or frustrated by the successes and failures of their students? And what teacher of adolescents has not experienced power struggles or direct attacks on their human frailities and cherished values? Adolescence is a period charged with high-intensity emotion, and all those who teach teens of necessity will become involved in a multitude of emotionally ladened encounters.

Pearlman (1979) clearly describes the tempest with which we are likely to find ourselves engaged:

> ". . . relationships are affected. Passionate attachments to persons, to ideas, to ideals, to causes, to activities through which self-expression can be realized--all these are craved, sought, talked about, experimented with. To belong, to be 'crazy about', to 'adore', to 'believe in', to be keenly sensitive to the

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"Teachers Have Problems . . . Other Than Just Students" by Ann Voorhees and Thomas Voorhees.

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Correction

In Clay M. Starlin's response to the Drummond article which appeared in the January 1981 issue of Iowa Perspective, the following correction should be noted: (Pg. 20, section 3) For example, consider the normal limits of "thoughts of suicide" as between zero and three times a year.

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Correspondence

What's Indecent About Exposure?

As you well know, there is a widely accepted axiom that . . . history tends to repeat itself. It certainly does not require much scholarly effort to find supportive evidence for such a maxim. In fact, a rather mature argument could be entertained that nothing is ever totally free from antecedental tracing. In essence . . . the same old song with a novel pitch. Those who subscribe to such an epistemy must have been somewhat taken by the content of the January 1981 issue of *Iowa Perspective*. New indeed!

As editor of the *Perspective*, you are to be congratulated for this issue's fresh and courageous approach. It certainly is a progressive professional step. I especially admired your ". . . disclaimers yet no apologies" position. Your concerns that the issue could be received (and identified with) by many of our colleagues in education and allied mental health professions as offensive are probably well founded. But what the heck Carl . . . who ever paid any attention to a non-buzzing bee! If we are sincere to our exclaimed child advocacy, that which inhibits the educational and mental health of children is fair game for stinging.

If the January 1981 *Perspective* is a harbinger of future efforts . . . right on! And for whatever value your publishing powers place in the statement of a single reader, you have my personal endorsement. My only critique is your qualifier that ". . . the views expressed in the material in this issue do not in any way reflect the position of the Iowa Department of Public Instruction." Tch! Tch! Carl is this your act of "accepting powerlessness" and isn't there a social/legal sanction against indecent exposure?

Arnold E. Lang, Supervisor
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Elkader, Iowa

A Perspective on Resolution

I just finished reading January's *Perspective* and feel compelled to reply.

Drummond is truly roller-coasting reading. I love being amused, amazed, annoyed, frightened and enraged all within a few pages! So many thoughts were provoked-where do I begin?

Powerlessness and madness are undeniably akin--with powerlessness beginning long before madness. The terms "power" and "powrlessness" both have negative connotations for me. How does anyone have power without subjecting someone else to powerlessness? Making decisions, solving problems, giving input, evaluating options, initiating change are not "powers" to be given away--they are behaviors that are learned. I'm not convinced that powerlessness (or madness for that matter) is necessarily bad. Not everyone wants or needs a lot of power over others. Power, the pursuit of it, the delusions of it, are certainly not analogous with mental health. Rather than powerless, one could be power-free. Part of the healing process is postponing the stress and responsibility of being powerful until stronger times--not an attempt to strip the individual, but rather to strengthen. I can't dispute there are abuses. Unfortunately, mental health, education and law enforcement are fields that tend to attract those who enjoy supressing and manipulating others. As we continue to rely on a differential diagnosis and employ a team approach, we tend to minimize these abusive instances.

Drummond reminds me of why I fled from sociology in college: a) I can't stand the insufferable do-gooders and bleeding hearts, b) I resent hearing that nothing can be done, and c) I get tired of the blaming and fault-finding. I gave up long ago waiting for ineffective, indirect, never-to-materialize solutions. I like the immediate impact of a direct approach, small-scale though it may be. That's where the excitement in education lies--being able to be a significant other in even a single child's life. Drummond's approach implies the need for more centralization (can't you just see him explaining it to Ronald Reagan?). As with all sociological approaches, the scope becomes too wide for educators. Social engineering (Lazarus' term) is just not functional for teachers. We cannot possibly remove all the stresses or supply all the missing needs that a child faces in his environment. But we can develop the appropriate academic, social, and human relations skills that will enable a child to begin meeting his own needs. We have the opportunity to identify needs (with, without or inspite of a label), plan specifically and initiate change. Keeping in mind what we can and cannot do in the classroom, let's exert our energy proportionately.

Drummond makes some interesting points about drug therapy. As a teacher I rely very heavily on the medical profession for direction in this area, and I will continue to do so. I **have to** believe in training institutions, certification boards and professional organizations to prepare, screen and monitor my medical colleagues. (I can't do **everything** myself.) As an additional safeguard, I follow Eisenberg's (1977) guidelines for use of psychoactive drugs: there must be a) a **clear** indication for use, b) careful supervision (this implies doctor, parent and teacher), and c) caution regarding toxicity. No question, drugs can compensate for organic deficits and may make students more receptive to educational strategies, but **they don't teach!** The responsibility for training remains the teacher's.

Ellen's response is really very nicely done, making many valid points. Although I understand why she adopts Drummond's comments regarding adult psychiatric patients to the education of ED children, I think we need to be cautious here. ED children are not, after all, itty bitty psychotics, nor would we expect them to grow up to be Drummond's patients. There are some

very basic differences between adults in therapy and children in school, and these differences tend to complicate drawing parallels. For example, "powerlessness" in adults is much different than that of children who are quite naturally inexperienced, immature, dependent and susceptible to environmental forces. Also, adults have the advantage of being able to initiate treatment where as children do not. Furthermore, a child's verbal ability based on his experiences and training places limitations on the interactions that can occur and will affect treatment or interventions. Although there are similarities, it is misleading to assume that the issues facing adults in the medical model can be matched one-to-one with those of children in the educational model.

Even so, I like the points Ellen makes, especially about labeling. She is so right. I often wonder what would happen if we stopped fussing about labels and just concentrated on learners. Would the labels eventually fade away if we kept on ignoring them?

I find Starlin's comments very helpful (so organized and precise) and at times very moving. There is much to ponder in the section on the positive potential of psychotic experiences. What extraordinary insight he has! I recently read a poem about a young man who, wanting to "feel his feet free beneath him, free from earth," walks out on to the frozen lake in April. The poem continues with a plea to "trust for once the things you do not understand . . ." I kept recalling these lines as I read Starlin. Only in the poem, the ice gives way and the young man drowns. Is that, too, a different state of reality? I really admire those who can step out onto the ice trusting it will hold them.

Helen Rodefeld
Learning Disabilities Teacher
Des Moines, Iowa

Solutions Are Important Also

I just read the Drummond article and associated responses in your January *Iowa Perspective*. Drummond, of course, writes extremely well and puts me immediately in mind of Thomas Szas, or R. D. Laing, and less obviously but quite clearly, Gregory Bateson. I believe that Drummond, as a social critic, has no particular responsibility to suggest solutions to the problems that he describes (and I really believe he is highly accurate in his descriptions of the power relationships and stupidities involved in the judgements and treatments we visit on emotional disturbance), but it would certainly be interesting and probably highly useful to have him apply as much energy and thought to possible solutions as he did to admiring the problem.

It is not sufficient to suggest or imply that we should all become politically active. If the system is corrupt, the people within it are not, and presumably, there are a number of "down home" actions that each of us take to mitigate or solve the problem for specific individuals with whom we deal. I have often referred to Bockoven's little book entitled, *Moral Therapy in America Psychiatry*, or something similar to that, which seems to me to contain a number of sensible ideas about practical means of helping persons whose problems in living have begin to overwhelm them.

It was fascinating to read the responses published along with Drummond's piece.

Keep up the good work.

Bruce Balow
Professor
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The Effects of Disturbed Adolescents on their Teachers (cont.)

> approval or disapproval of certain others, to take in certain people and ideas voraciously (or cast them off ruthlessly), to ape behaviors, to pour feelings, at times almost hysterically, into union with another--all these commonly observed actions and attitudes bespeak the ravaging attachment hungers and needs of adolescents and they include a host of socially induced conflicts and tensions. Their relationships are often tempestous, short-lived, oscillating in arcs from 'love' to 'hate'.

These natural developmental conflicts are intensified for disturbed and disruptive youth. As a rule, the disturbed adolescent "is not in the psychological state we would like to have him. He is negativistic, often hostile, insecure, irritable; he feels superior and pretends a still greater superiority; often he is not interested in what we can offer him and very rarely does he expect that the hours with us will serve a useful purpose" (Aichorn, 1964). As authority figures, teachers often find themselves the target for much of this turmoil and they frequently become embroiled in battles for control with behaviorally disordered adolescents. Resolving control and independence conflicts is a vital psychosocial developmental task for all adolescents. With disturbed adolescents, battles over control are often complicated by the fact that the struggle for control and independence is often the primary focus of the disturbed or disturbing behavior.

Because adolescent psychopathology so often focuses around developmentally important generational conflicts, teachers of disturbed youngsters find themselves between the proverbial rock and hard place. If they oppose maladaptive behavior they are very likely to be seen as the enemy. If, on the other hand, out of a desire not to be seen as the enemy they condone such activities, they are apt to be perceived as someone who can be easily manipulated. If this Catch-22 delimma isn't enough to make teachers feel helpless, the ready available realization that youngsters have the ultimate control usually is.

Teachers of disturbed adolescents find themselves involved in still another level of conflict. Disturbed pupils extend the influence of their deviance to engage the system by emitting "bad" behavior of the sort typically punished by the school. Teachers are likely to feel severe unsubtle pressure and expectations to act as agents of the school system. If educators remain reserved and detached from their pupils, identifying with the system and becoming protective of the rules the student is violating, no meaningful contacts can be established. But, if they side with the youngster, condone the misbehavior, or fail to enforce school consequences, they are apt to come into conflict with their colleagues, administrators, and community.

In addition to their conflicts with the youngsters and the system, teachers of disturbed adolescents are all too likely to be in conflict with themselves. For most adults, adolescence is a long and thankfully forgotten period of development. It "is a tumultuous and painful experience of the recent past. One does not wish to be reminded of it. The gangly, ill-at-ease, unsure creature of adolescence is too uncomfortably familiar to the adults" (Barterm & Buonanno 1972). Daily contact with struggling adolescents taxes one's defenses and causes all too many recollections of one's personal adolescence to come flooding back.

Thus, because of their personal histories and the provocative behavior of adolescents, adults usually become uncomfortable around disturbed youth. And when made anxious, they respond to their discomfort in all the vast and complex ways of defending themselves of which humans are capable. These range from denying their own feelings or avoiding or suppressing adolescents' behavior--"all to escape the anxiety, the pain of working with these youth whose developmental struggles rekindle our own, and whose continual provocativeness make work with adolescents an intense emotional interpersonal encounter" (Pearlman 1979).

Pickhardt (1978) has identified three primary interpersonal adequacy needs of teachers with their students: to be liked, to be effective, and to be in control. "When these adequacy needs become frustrated, they can transform into adequacy fears. The teacher who experiences strong student dislike might learn to fear rejection, the teacher whose students refuse to learn might begin to fear failure, and the teacher who cannot control a class might learn to fear disobedience. Students who consistently frustrate a teacher can become such a potent stimulus for fear that the teacher will begin to dread encountering them each day". Of course, many such fear-inducing youngsters will populate programs for emotionally disabled and chronicaly disruptive adolescents. Consequently, teachers of disturbed youth will have frequent occasion to feel unliked, ineffective, and out of control.

Teaching disturbed adolescents triggers intense feelings from two sources; the emotionality and provocative behavior of pupils, and the personal needs of the teacher. If students attack us aggressively with gusto, we will experience feelings of anger; if pupils try, try, try, and fail, fail, fail, we will experience feelings of despair. Such emotional reactions are natural emotional responses that most concerned and caring educators would have. If, on the other hand, in the face of a student's repeated acts of physical aggression, a teacher steadfastly resists the use of limits, isolation, and aversive consequences, the response is idiosyncratic and very likely to reflect an "argument (Redl) with the past". As teachers begin to recognize and accept their feelings and to differentiate arguments with their pasts from natural reactions to provocative student behavior, they will begin to reduce the number of their irrational responses to students misbehavior and to develop a significant tool for identifying the affective state of their students. Becoming better able to differentiate their emotional needs from those of their students, teachers will be more likely to make psychoeducationally sound responses to the provocative behavior of disturbed adolescents.

The remainder of this paper will describe several common situations which indicate that the adult is experiencing anxiety, is unaware of the personal stress and conflict, and is reacting in an inappropriate manner. By pointing out the interpersonal underworld of teaching disturbed adolescents, the paper will help teachers to recognize, experience, and have their feelings, and, as Fritz Redl was wont to say, not be had by their feelings.

Helplessness Rage

Adults very often become quite punitive--or mean, or stupid, or confused--in their interactions with children they like. This happens not out of any malice towards the youngster, but from a keen sense of helplessness. Only those who care about their pupils can suffer this malady; the indifferent and unconcerned are immune. We are helpless much of the time because the behavior of disturbed adolescents is not easy to understand and because we often realize how limited our results are. I can recall a life space interview with an intelligent, talented, attractive and quite depressed teenaged girl. After listening to her for a while, I brought out a large mirror and asked her to look into it, to notice how "miserable she made herself look", and to ask herself "why anyone would want to interact with anyone who looked and acted like that". The impact was devastating; our relationship nearly destroyed. Later, while discussing this "technique" for releasing internalized anger with my supervisor, I became acutely aware of my inability to understand how so "fortunate" a girl could be so "messed up", how little I was able to do to communicate my caring and alleviate her distress, and how angry her depression made *me!*

Then there is the almost unendurable helplessness we feel in attempting to communicate with angry and upset adolescents. Approaching a youngster in an empathic, warm, and caring manner, we ask what is troubling him; the hostile and sullen response befuddles us. The more we try to clarify the caring nature of our interaction, the more he persists in seeing us as hostile. In such situations, adults are likely to become anxious, angry, and incompetent--in short, helpless. Attempts to understand and help are now very likely to turn into "time-out", "physical restraint", or punishment for "inappropriate behavior". When children misperceive our intentions, many of us panic and act more aggressively and impulsively than could possibly be good for the youngster. Unrecognized helplessness rage compromises our relationships with students and severely limits our teaching effectiveness.

Anger At Our Teammates

After working for weeks with a youngster I initially had requested to not be placed with me, he and I established a shaky truce. His daily outbursts were now less than weekly, and I was only infrequently told to perform impossible or athletic sexual acts. Coming late to school one day, John headed straight for my class. He was stopped for a pass. Not having one, he was directed to the assistant principal's office. Unleashing the verbal behavior I believed he saved for me alone, John found fault with five generations of that teacher's family in less than three seconds--all in pyrotechnic prose. When I learned of his five day suspension, my comments to the principal were little short of rude. My private ruminations scoured the obvious insensitivity, incompetence, and counter productive actions of my principal: "He sits in his office all day, gives me a kid I don't want, and when I finally get something going with the kid, he screws the whole thing up by kicking him out!"

Although at times it is certainly true that the catalog of errors other educators make with disturbed adolescents is infinite, that parents undo the good work we have accomplished, and that therapists working with one youngster at a time don't know what its like in our classroom, the angry feelings reflected in our silent accusations do not enhance our teaching affectivenss with disturbed adolescents. On the contrary, our personal antipathies may have counterproductive effects on students. For example resentment against harsh, rejecting, and authoritarian parents may make us go overboard in giving a child sympathy and affection, when at that precise moment compassionate but firm limit setting is required. On the other hand, perceiving inconsistent, indulgent, and over-permissive behavior of previous teachers, we may, at a stressful moment for a child, 'lay down the law' when what the youngster needs just then is a relaxed and permitting environment. Anger at our teammates, when not recognized and managed, horribly complicates our interactions with colleagues and parents, making collaborative encounters (such as IEP conferences) untenable and minimizing the chances for successful instruction.

Envy Of the Young

Why do adults become so angry when they talk with adolescents about littered beer cans, too loudly played music, boisterous laughing when adults don't see the humor, or public displays of affection? Sure parents must be responsible; sure teachers must be accountable; but responsible and accountable for what and why? Doing it "for their own good" is perhaps the greatest self-deception practiced by parental adults.

> "The carefree behavior of the young is often enviable. Frequently unhindered by a strict conscience, sometimes prone to forget duties and prohibitions, children can act with such joy and abandon as to evoke a kind of nostalgic, unrealistic envy in each of us. We feel that we never were quite like that and never would want to be, and yet somehow it must be tremendously pleasant. In contrast to these impulsive, uninhibited youngsters, we must be controlled and organized. Our hidden envy of their pleasures, so free from guilt, may make us very angry. Now, anger is relatively harmless as long as we know about it. But if we make ourselves pretend that we are not angry but only thinking of the youngsters own good, we may find ourselves becoming unnecessarily punitive in our contacts with him. We need to be on guard against this type of distortion in our behavior as teachers, even as we work steadily to help children become more self-disciplined." (Redl)

Complexity Shock

A graduate student of mine was teaching an intellectually limited, chronically schizophrenic 17 year old girl. The girl's verbal responses to her active auditory hallucinations were attracting considerable adult and peer attention. The amount of school work she completed was limited, its accuracy irregular. We decided to employ the "tried and true", "reinforce an incompatible response". Using cigarettes, coffee, and teacher praise (all known to be very important to this girl) as reinforcers, an attempt was made to decrease psychotic behavior by increasing time on academic tasks. Success, time on task soared above an 80 percent level; however, the hallucinations continued unabated and the accuracy level (math problems) was poor. Rewards were reserved for correct responses. Success-accuracy increased to 100 percent, time on task hovered near 90 percent; however, hallucinatory behavior continued at baseline levels! What the heck do you do now? The supposedly incompatible behaviors were cotemporaneous! All of us tend to be thrown for a loop when our simple, established solutions suddently don't work any more. It is difficult to let go of our assumptions. "Ignore inappropriate behavior while rewarding desired behavior." "If I am warm and friendly to anxious youngsters, they'll relax and respond to me." It's all very simple, that is until we run up against adolescents and situations that don't fit our formulas. Instances of this kind abound in teaching disturbed youth. Up to then we thought we knew what to do and how to do it. Now we realize that with a certain youngster, other assumptions, approaches, and techniques are needed and we don't have them available. The resultant complexity shock can lead us to a quest for more constructive efforts, or just leave us with frustration, anger, and a longing for those good old cases of yesteryear.

Paranoic Sellout

As a counselor at a camp for disturbed junior high school aged boys, I came under the supervision of a camp director who believed that cleanliness was next to sanity (ah, teammate anger!). Cabins were to be cleaned (read, sterilized) before the boys began their morning activities The director examined all the cabins, and at lunch awarded a travelling trophy to the day's cleanest cabin. The dirtiest cabin was also identifed so that everyone could sing "The Goat Song" to these campers. Well, I always believed that cleanliness was next to cleanliness, but we had the unfailing ability to be the dirtiest cabin in camp. I could not allow this psychological torture of my eight goats to continue. Under supervision that would make a concentration camp jailor jealous, my dirty eight began to win the clean cabin award day after day. After several consecutive "wins" the kids no longer liked me nor I them. Mercifully, the session only had a week left. The second session found my cabin safely in the range of tolerably

dirty! Too often a critical look at what we do with children would reveal that our behavior stems not from what we really think is important for these children at this time, but rather from whether, in the eyes of an observer, our actions would appear to be beyond professional reproach. Heeding the "voices" of authority we begin to look differently at the "badness" or "wrongness" of children's behavior. Was I really fostering dirtiness and emotional chaos? Was I really doing my job? Didn't I have to take decisive action? Our professional wisdom yields to perceived threats of authorities. As teachers, we are likely to feel that if children misbehave in our presence, we are somehow responsible; so we can't allow it to happen or to pass without proving we are on the side of goodness. Paranoic sellouts cause us to act with motivations unrelated to the actual needs of children.

I/We Can Do It Better Syndrome

This syndrome has two subtypes, model mania and what Redl called "day-dreams of glory against our tormentors". In the latter instance, we plan to show how wrong are the uncooperative colleagues, unfair critics and advocates of the wrong theories who question our strategies and results. Our need to prove to experts, peers, and superiors that they are wrong leads us to attempt to demonstrate the superiority of our own unique ideas and actions. Our need to show that we can "do it differently and better than anyone else" often leads us into impossible situations. We take a really tough, streetwise youngster and try to prove how massive doses of TLC are all that is really needed to curb his long history of anti-social behavior. And when the youngster steals our purse or defaces or car, we are confused, embarrased, and resentful.

Model Mania is the same phenomena extended to the group. Residential and day treatment centers suffer intensely from this malady. Perceiving, rightly or wrongly, that they are not compatible with the prevailing philosophy of least restrictive environments, staff or non-mainstream programs are likely to feel under attack. They develop a great variety of potentially therapeutic milieus and strategies which then are trumpeted as "the way" to teach/treat disturbed adolescents. Such a stance often is more a product of the "circle-the-wagon" feelings of the staff than the needs of the varied youngsters they serve. School based programs are not exempt. A need to find "programs for our kids" abounds. The belief that a school division's disturbed youngsters are somehow different from those in other programs fuels model-mania in public school systems. The we-can-do-it-better syndrome makes programs inflexible and non-responsive to youngsters. Adolescents who "won't" benefit from the program are readily transferred elsewhere. In the need to "show 'em" we fail to examine the suitability of our approaches for the vastly differing and infinitely complex human beings we serve.

Success and the Time Warp

Tyrone couldn't read a lick. All attempts to get him to read were met with furious outbursts, often of such intensity that he was forcefully removed to the intensive care unit. A new teacher, in the form of a graduate student teaching-intern, took on the challenge of teaching Tyrone to read. They began with Tyrone conducting her on a tour of the hospital. He responded to her questions by "reading" the bathroom signs; then the cigarette, candy, and soda brands from the machines. Later, language experience activities were begun with "boss" Tyrone dictating letters to "secretary" Barbara. And later still, Tyrone began to read high interest/low reading level materials and answer questions about what he had read. With his teacher present, Tyrone would struggle on with the gently accelerating instructional pace. We now decided it was time for Tyrone to "realize what a good reader he had become" so that he might start to become an independent learner. On a random basis, Tyrone's requests for help--"What's this word", "This is dumb", etc., were to be answered with responses such as "Come on Tyrone, you can do it yourself" or "Give it another try, Tyrone." The first such remark triggered the fury we hadn't seen in two months.

Reading is a complex activity. Learning to read places a great burden on a youngster. For disturbed adolescents, major improvements in learning and adaptive social behavior come slowly through sustained effort, and only with emotional support. It's tough to live with a partially improved self. "Normal" is easier. Outright ignorance, psychopathology, or criminality are easier. The inbetween stages are hardest of all. Between "Who cares" and "I can do it" come painful realizations of "I'm not too good at this" and "This stuff is too hard for me." A youngster's sense of competence is quickly sabatoged by stark confrontations with personal inadequacies. So, Tyrone backs away from the independent reading experience. Perceiving himself stripped of his previous support, he avoids being pushed into a situation with which he may not be able to cope.

With curricular approaches to emotionally disturbed learners currently in vogue, it is easy to pay lip service to adolescents' mental health needs. We can get so turned on by the emergence of students' learning ability that we want to push them along much faster than their emotional state will allow. When students are emotional "messes" and intellectual "dummies", we can be more relaxed and supportive. With improvement, we get our hopes up and ambitiously strive for even greater gains. When youngsters fail, and they will fail, we often feel disillusioned, disappointed, and angry. These are heavy and unnecessary emotional burdens for teachers. Yet, time and again we set ourselves up for this excess emotional baggage.

Resource teachers often have seen children perform ably under their supervision only to fail miserably at the same activity when back in their regular classrooms. Now, rather than frustration and anger with the student, the regular teacher becomes the target. And, of course, the feelings are reciprocated. Unfortunately, most school systems--with their emphasis on the over-quick production of measurable improvement, strictly curricular IEPs, and mainstreaming mania-set the stage for staff reactions of this type. Irrespective of what we consider appropriate instruction, learning does not take place in a linear manner; it is cyclical with setbacks following advances; inability to perform easy tasks coexists with advanced skills, and yesterday's knowledge is somehow unavailable today. For disturbed youth, learning often is a psychoeducational roller coaster

replete with dizzying highs and staggering lows. As teachers of disturbed adolescents, we must learn to become comfortable with the inevitable ups and downs of our students, and we must not let success warp our sense of the time it takes for new learning to become secure.

Implementation Despair

Two youngsters "erupt" at the same time. You move toward one, sending your aide to the other. But what if you don't have an aide? Billy loves to wander out of your classroom, noisily meander down the halls, and run when you go after him. You are pretty certain that this is attention seeking behavior, and that by ignoring it while providing ample social and tangible reinforcers in the classroom, you can end the wandering in a few days. But Mrs. Jones absolutely "will not tolerate Billy coming to her door and making faces at her", and the custodian will "kill him" if he catches him in his closet "one more time". Tony is about to explode in response to some heavy teasing. You say, "Tony, do me a favor please and get me a coke." He instantly calms down, and says "sure," takes your money and heads out the door. He quickly reappears in tow of an assistant principal who says, "No one's supposed to be in the halls during class time." He deposits an irate youngster in your room and departs. In each instance appropriate and necessary interventions were initiated. In each case the teacher is prevented from implementing a likely-to-succeed strategy. In each case the teacher will be forced to use stop-gap, less effective, or counterproductive techniques. When faced with situations like these that destroy our potential effectiveness as teachers, we get anxious, worried, and angry. Even if we don't take it out directly on our students, they will sense our irritability and react to it. We can easily get caught in a vicious cycle, feeling that we're trapped in a school where it's impossible to do the job we know we are capable of doing. And pretty soon, the class is responding to our anger. In times like these, it is of paramount importance to remember that it's not the kids' fault. Nor did the parents do this. As professionals, we need to come forth, speak up, and fight for what we know is needed to do the job. And, at the same time, each of us must deal with our implementation despair and keep it from coming between ourselves and our pupils.

Retreat Into Professional Neutrality

During a recent grand rounds seminar of the psychiatry department at a local medical school, the guest speaker finished a lengthy lecture on the treatment of adolescents with severe behavior disorders with the conclusion that such youngsters are essentially untreatable. A courageous resident asked the speaker if he thought these kids were untreatable because we didn't like treating them? And did phone calls from the police, complaints from the schools, and resistance from the parents enter into his conclusion?

Anger is not the only response to feelings of helplessness. Advoidance is another way we handle unpleasant situations. Rather than accept and manage the pain associated with setbacks and failures; rather than speak out for the materials and services necessary to do our jobs; rather than to point publicly at the ludicrousness of system imposed directives that are incompatible with successful teaching of disturbed youth, we often conclude that a particular youngster really is untreatable. Or we conclude that we are not able or nice enough to do the job. Or we develop great professional objectivity and reconsider the case by performing "psychological vivisection (Redl,) -- "Well, what did we really expect from a schizoid personality with a borderline IQ and limited social and academic skills?" It's not that everyone can succeed with every disturbed teenager. Rather, we must honestly search within ourselves for the real reasons we move away from youngsters.

Teaching very disturbed adolescents often triggers fears we have about the abnormal. Grotesque and repugnant behavior can be experienced as terrifying and revolting. It takes time to manage such anxieties and fears. Not that eliminating soiling or bizarre grimacing is unimportant, but when the reason for trying to eliminate and replace those behaviors with socially more appropriate ones is our personal distress, we are likely to fail. Our anxiety and implicit rejection will be perceived by even severely psychotic adolescents. Retreating into professional neutrality saves us from facing our feelings of helplessness and fear at the cost of severely compromising disturbed youngsters chances of receiving appropriate psychoeducational programming.

Conclusion

Teaching disturbed adolescents is a psychologically hazardous adventure in human relationships. Time and again, positively and negatively, the emotional generators of our adult professional personalities are energized by the youngsters we teach and the circumstances in which we teach them. Refusal to recognize the emotional impact students have upon us and how that affects our professional work impairs our ability to establish rapport with youths, limits our instructional effectiveness, and establishes us as prime candidates for the despair and depression of teacher burnout. Accepting special education's interpersonal underworld allows us to disengage from unproductive conflicts, to forego battles with windmills in exchange for struggles with real dragons, and as a marvelous extra, to continue to grow as teachers and as human beings.

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Adults and Adolescents

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Bloom's paper contains many incisive observations: those of us with the good fortune to know Redl find ourselves going back again and again to rejuvenate our energy to face current professional perplexities. The following thoughts are corollary to the issues and illustrations Bloom presents.

First, there is a peculiar contemporary tendency to underestimate the significance of interpersonal relationships. In special education, we often act as if cognitive activity takes place in an affective vacuum. But the old observation still stands that whenever two or more people are in the same life space, there is affective arousal even when we ignore it or relegate it to unimportance. As Bloom says, the affective may dominate even when we think we are just "teaching a specific math skill." Nonverbal content exceeds the verbal. All conditions carry more or less emotional baggage. There is much more than meets the conscious awareness. And the relationships are often most subtle in nature.

The concern, simply, is transference and countertransference. The adolescent has great skill in arousing feelings in any relationship that are displaced from their generating source. The game of many adolescents is the distortion of the objective condition to fit their inner inclinations. The more humane the teacher, the more that person is a likely target for these deeper tests of response coming from outside what actually transpires between the two. On the other side, certain teachers virtually bait any latent pathology an adolescent may have by their own behavior--tart authority reactions, moralizing the obvious or indulgence with the very impulse the adolescent is trying to overcome. I will discuss more of this subsequently.

Every adolescent, and especially the disturbed adolescent, attends his or her own school and exploits the situation for personal needs. We educators sometimes mistakenly think they come to our school, and especially to our conceptualized school, which may itself be imaginative. But they do not. They attend the school of their perceptions, whatever these may be. We could say school is a place where two imaginary sets of perceptions are put in counterpoint, ours and theirs. In such problem transference the adolescent brings threats, labels us unfair, and accuses us of doing what we have worked diligently to be sure we do not do. We perceive ourselves as *not* being unfair, overbearing, moralistic, compulsive, and the like. We justify our counter reaction as the true, realistic assessment of the situation. Newman (1974) has written eloquently on this matter.

The other side of the dyad is adult countertransference, which often matches the adolescent. It is interesting how few special teachers of the disturbed are at home with what the pupil brings as his birthright of being disordered. As one youngster said, "You are always asking me to behave right. If I could I wouldn't be here." Teachers of emotionally distraught youngsters should be able to do the delicate balancing act. On the tightrope, they neither lean to the side of indulging deviant behavior nor do they expect the youngster to always be correct. This is doubly hard because many of us who teach are still at least partial adolescents. We have so many unresolved problems which we act out. We may vicariously envy the carefree, easygoing lifestyle that is the license of adolescence. Our gratification of our own impulses may be no less than theirs. Fascination with material objects, doing one's own thing, sexual preoccupation, transitory rebellions - a good many who consider themselves great workers with adolescents express these hallmarks of being adolescents.

Some make their peace by joining the adolescent subculture. The other side are those who alienated from the vigor and creative potential of the adolescent period -- assaultive though it may be -- that they have no resonance with it at all. They have crossed over, not into adulthood, but to constrictive rigidity. This clinical judgement of when to tolerate a piece of behavior and when to induce proper controls wears one out. But it is what we are paid to do. Families which cannot change this balance with the changes in the adolescent fail them. Actually, as Lipsitz (1977) and others have shown, this is the tragic dilemma of interaction with early adolescents. Adult panic sets the stage for repression. The ability to focus on the problems of the youngster without contaminating the atmosphere by releasing one's own unresolved responses is what countertransference is about.

We all have unfinished business: it is the fate of being a human being. Most of us can handle relationships at the general level of friendliness without turning either cold or becoming overinvolved. When we start going deeper in layers of relationship, we often find our objectivity in jeopardy. What the pupil does may not evoke a well modulated useful reaction in us. It gets to us, our unfinished business, and we react with uncalled-for responses. These may be affectively positive -- we would overprotect the innocent. Or they may be negative -- we reject even the sight of the disturbed with their deviance and respond primitively. This has been described by Long as the stress and conflict cycle (Long & Duffner, 1980).

One thing which has been useful in managing our countertransference is the examination of our own unfinished business. It may not take "three years on the couch" to list the places, persons and behavior which causes us to lose the delicate balance. Bloom has indicated some of these. Each one of us had our own private list. If we do not know these items, they control us. When we do know them, we can exert control to keep us in shape.

So many of us working with deviance forget our profession and try to practice magic that will dissolve

pathology, as if Behavior Modification, Life Space Interviewing or whatever was the one and only instant cure. We must, in fact, forego the normal expectations if we are to work with the disturbed. It is normal to want to be liked, to want to be helpful and even to actually be helpful. When adolescent conditions negate these normal, good human desires on which mental health motivation is based, it is normal for us to be upset. This may explain why those who work most intimately with the disturbed adolescent need to see progress which others may not see: there must be progress or we give up on the case. But the actual role calls for us not to respond in these normal ways. We indeed must be abnormal, and give up these healthy, self-verifying expectations. One has to get one's satisfaction from knowing we are doing the right thing to help, though the change may be too delayed to give us the desired feedback. We need to understand when our normal expectation becomes a rescue phantasy which distorts the true condition.

As Bloom says, even normal adolescence is a particularly difficult period for most adults. When I ask an audience how many would like to live their own adolescence over again just as it was, the count of hands is usually far under 50 percent. To some, the very thought is upsetting. It is no wonder there is so much countertransference as we adults see adolescents reenacting painful scenes from our own past. Just how trying adolescence is in general may be debatable. The old view was storm and stress with old moorings torn loose translated to the Ericksonian identify crisis. Revisionists like Adelson (1966) maintain that adolescence is no more stressful than other developmental periods. Perhaps all stages are more stressful today. Nevertheless, for our clientele, already out of balance as they enter adolescence, one certainly sees considerable pain and reaction in their search for a workable independent identity.

For one thing, the adolescent is playing for keeps. Not all of our reaction to their behavior is countertransference because they are doing the same unfortunate things adults do but are in a more vulnerable position. They are not old enough to get by with what adults do and somehow survive. Since adolescence is a time of tragic import, there is good reason to be "upset" at much which goes on. Countertransference aside, the behavior of what some disturbed adolescents do is indeed tragic by objective, predicted consequence standards. Some burn out their circuits on drugs. Some play "chicken" in cars taunting self-destruction and homicide. Some bring new life into the world with no appreciation of what this means, this ultimate human irresponsibility which they unfortunately share with many adult parents. Some become alienated existentialists. Some devalue education and stymie their future and waste their talents as we say, without finding sustaining happiness.

Of course, they did not invent any of these response patterns. They just identify with adult models. Only these adult-children are too young yet, and what is more, in them is our hope for the future. Indeed, what is the world coming to? These are indeed serious societal problems but we cannot take out society's anxiety on them. It is popular to make them the scapegoats for a society in transition. We forget this adolescent age also exemplifies caring, ebullience, concern for causes, forthrightness and straight thinking. These are adolescent characteristics too, only we see less of these than the negative in our subgroup. This can distort our view of the future.

Actually, the generation gap which was invented by Margaret Mead is only half a statement. The gap between adolescent and adolescent and between adult and adult is every bit as great as between adolescent and adult. One can find one's self closer to an adolescent who recognizes sham for what it is than an adult who plays the institutional games.

Perhaps the central hangup is around authority. There is little clarity about this aspect of our role. We have been caught on both horns of the dilemma: these distraught adolescents are in need of authority even when, or especially when, they curse it out. On the other hand, there is little place for adult authority since all ages are not said to be equal in rights, understanding and insight. Such primitive conceptualization may be the stuff of conferences and newspaper articles, but it certainly won't hold in the school milieu. If the adults do not have more understanding than the adolescents, they should not be paid to help them. But this does not give adults ritualistic authoritarian rights. And if it did bestow such rights, who would explain to the adolescents so that they were respectful of our prerogatives? The trouble with old style authoritarianism is that it usually doesn't work and when it does, the type of modeling it encourages is unfortunate. Functional role authoritarianism is a thing of the past.

Authority is quite another thing from authoritarianism. It is interactive. It is respectful. It is flexible. It is empathic. It is based upon an external reality and set of values which are beyond the individual. The goal is to solve a social problem, to develop an acceptable social and intrapersonal process. In the absence of adult wisdom one regresses to role authoritarianism. Intrinsic authority rests upon the integrity of the adult and the adult's experience which allows penetration into the adolescent's mode of thinking as well as the predictive knowledge of the significance of given behaviors. What saps this type of authority? Defending nonsense, trying to get adolescents to accept institutional demands which are not reasonable or valid, ignoring the environmental conditions which need modification, not speaking out about unfairness, and not understanding the dilemma of the adolescent well enough to be able to explain what is going on, all weakens intrinsic authority. We all need and respond to that authority which has validity. We are enriched by it, not dominated or belittled by such authority. There is more modeling and identification than demanding and punishing in the application of intrinsic authority.

No one should expect "a rose garden" when following the profession of teaching disturbed adolescents. It will depend upon a high level of self-knowledge and self-awareness. We need to probe our own values. There is a need for courage to examine our own internal mechanics and rework our understanding of current developmental problems. Otherwise, we act blindly. We need courage to be honest about the absurdities we are supposed to enforce, and indeed the many absurdities of the culture of which we are a part. Each, in small ways, needs the courage to engage the

system. When one looks at the massive myths of our contemporary special education, is there any better place to start than on this new paper tiger? Someplace under the forms, rules and rigamarole must lie buried the psychological essence of helping adolescents. As Bloom says, there is nothing ingenuous about our task.

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Acceptance and Security

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The common theme throughout Bloom's paper is that the task of teaching and working with disturbed adolescents is a "psychologically hazardous adventure". If this is not clearly understood by the teacher, it might prevent growth from occurring in the adolescent or deny the personal needs factor of the teacher. Dr. Bloom suggests that his paper will help teachers of the "disturbed" understand the hazardous adventures they face, and in so doing assist teachers to grow as professionals and as human beings.

The Effects

The title of Dr. Bloom's paper seems to have but one interpretation. Some very unpleasant situations will be perpetrated on those individuals who have chosen to work with these predators called disturbed adolescents. These unpleasant situations also referred to as conflicts have been determined by Dr. Bloom.

There is the conflict of **control.** The teacher must, because of the handicapping nature of the disturbed adolescent, vie for the exclusive right to control. Control here means authority. Dr. Bloom suggests that authority within classrooms for disturbed adolescents is not absolutely in the hands of the teacher, but it appears to be negotiable. Situations that arise from this conflict of control Bloom refers to as "Helplessness rage" and "Complexity shock."

Conflict number two is with **the system.** The teacher senses the need to establish contact with each student. The teacher may sense the need to be an advocate, but the price will be heavy. **The system,** bound together by rules of policy, will test the teacher's will to remain an advocate and to run the risk of becoming a less valued commodity in the eyes of **the system.** Situations that arise from this conflict with the system, Dr. Bloom refers to as "anger at teammates", "paranoic sell out", "implementation despair".

The third and final conflict suggested by Dr. Bloom is the conflict with **self.** Teachers will be asked to make decisions that may be in conflict with their former adolescent lives and their current value systems. Teachers will be called on to enter into, at best, tenuous relationships with students knowing that "three primary interpersonal adequacy needs - to be liked, to be effective, and to be in control - may not be experienced each school day." Situations that arise from the conflict with **self** Bloom refers to as "Envy of young", "I can do it better, " "Success time warp", and "Retreat into Professional neutrality."

The situational conflicts determined by Dr. Bloom must ring true for many, if not all teachers of the "disturbed". Dr. Bloom wishes to make a very strong point that teachers of the "disturbed" must know what is happening within themselves. They must be able "to recognize experience and have their feelings . . . not to be had by their feelings" to be effective and to reduce the likelihood of situational conflicts.

While I agree with Dr. Bloom's contention that we must be aware of how the disturbed adolescent can and does effect the very roots of our personal adequacy, I suggest that more is needed than self-examination of one's feelings to reduce situational entanglement effectively. Situational conflicts may materialize, as Dr. Bloom suggests, out of the ashes of the near-to-be-burned-out teacher. More often, though, the conflicts suggested Dr. Bloom breed extensively in atmospheres where the disturbed adolescent is given an inadequate sense of acceptance and security.

Acceptance

Acceptance begins with knowing what we are faced with and then determining the role we will assume. Dr. Bloom suggests only an awareness of surface characteristics ("the disturbed adolescent is not in the psychological state that we would like to have him. He is often negative, hostile, insecure, irritable and feels superior.") These were unfortunate terms for Bloom to have used, for the characteristics he mentions are only symptoms of what is going on within the adolescent. They are not beginnings but ends; they are not causes of the adolescent's problem but results. Dr. Bloom suggests that because these characteristics exist, the disturbed adolescent has the power to create situations of conflict that can and do result in a lessening of the teacher's personal view of self-adequacy. We are challenged by Dr. Bloom to know our feelings and to "recognize the emotional impact the students have upon us;" we must accept Dr. Bloom's challenge and spend time in recognizing the intense concentration and effort involved in the exhausting experience of working with the disturbed adolescent. We must, however, be also willing to take on a second challenge.

The second challenge is to genuinely accept and care about every student, even the most difficult, disturbing ones. Meeting the second challenge starts with our looking past these surface behaviors of the disturbed adolescent. Time must be spent in locating the beginnings and the causes of disturbed adolescent behaviors. This second challenge can begin to be met by the placement of the adolescent into behavioral and educational programs staffed by teachers whose primary purpose is to meet the needs of the student. Such teachers understand fully that students are not in school to meet their teacher's needs but to have their own personal needs met. Needs are filled most often where there is acceptance. Being accepted is the inherent responsibility of the teacher for the "disturbed"; therefore, the responsible teacher will begin at the point where the adolescent is in his or her life. There is no judging, no valuing. To accept and not deny the way

things are creates an atmosphere which is less dense with conditions for conflict.

When an adolescent can sense acceptance, he may then begin to feel the conditions of security. With security and acceptance, in the disturbed adolescents' world, there will be time for subsurface exploration of personal feelings, attitudes and needs, thereby giving hope for the possibility for positive change.

Security

Security for the adolescent comes from the ability to predict accurately the people and conditions in one's environment. The teacher is predictable. The teachers' behavior is so consistent, their words so congruent with their behavior, that the adolescent eventually begins to believe or trust that these adults really do say what they mean and mean what they say. **Situational conflicts** such as limit testing and anger-provoking behaviors will be short lived. No matter what behavior the adolescent throws at the teacher, the teacher remains calm, consistent, accepting of the adolescent, but not of irresponsible acts. The teacher will remain firm and follow through with natural and logical consequences.

As teachers are predictable in their routine, so too will adolescents sense that they know where they fit in and what is expected of them. Flexibility must be offered to the adolescents within the structure of security, flexibility that allows the adolescent to have some choices available, some decisions to make, and some iniative they may bring to the situation.

Summary

Adults who become teachers for the disturbed adolescent do so because they sincerely want to be of help. Dr. Bloom's paper documents the challenges and ordeals that may at any time far outrun one's capacity to create for the disturbed adolescent an atmosphere of change. We are reminded by Dr. Bloom that teachers are human beings with personal needs, capabilities, hopes, fears and aspirations. We also are told by Dr. Bloom that "three primary interpersonal adequacy needs -- to be liked, to be effective and to be in control -- may be realized very infrequently." The challenge he suggests to the teachers of the "disturbed" is that they acquire personal insight. The challenge is to recognize the emotional impact students have upon us as teachers "and begin to recognize and accept our feelings." The challenge proposed by Dr. Bloom must be accepted as real, but so too must there be acceptance of the professional challenge I have proposed.

The professional challenge begins with a commitment to meet the needs of each disturbed adolescent, both those on the surface and those below the surface. Next, the teacher must learn to make use of his or her own particular talents and personalities to create the freeing atmosphere of change. The conditions created within this freeing atmosphere are **acceptance** and **security.** Freeing atmospheres provide the climate in which teachers can explore themselves and the needs of their students. For positive effectiveness to occur, a large portion of the teacher's attention and effort must be devoted to the creation of an atmosphere which makes exploration possible and encourages students to make maximum use of the positive relationships being formed. When this is done well, the need of the adolescent to achieve a sense of personal adequacy can be counted on to supply the impetus for movement. For the teacher to grow as a professional worker, self-examination of feelings and attention to the atmosphere being created must be continuing matters of concern for as long as one remains in the profession.

A Challenge to Teachers

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Dr. Bloom's paper could eas.ly have begun with the words:

"Teaching Adolescent Emotionally Disturbed Youth:

Notice: Participation in this process may be hazardous to your health. This process involves conflict, stress and confusion which when experienced in prolonged, excessive dosages have been determined to cause emotional disorders, job dissatisfaction and professional burn-out."

He believes that:

> Refusal to recognize the emotional impact students have upon us and how that affects our professional work impairs our ability to establish rapport with youths, limits our instructional effectiveness, and establishes us as prime candidates for the despair and depression of teacher burnout.

Bloom also states his remedy: "Accepting special educations interpersonal underworld allows us to disengage from unproductive conflicts to forego battles with windmills in exchange for struggles with real dragons. . ."

To Bloom's description of the problem, I say "Right on Bloom". It is in the phrase "refusal to recognize" that the key to his argument rests. Though the word "refusal" inherently implies a degree of conscious intent and may not be the best to use in describing this process, it *is* this process for whatever reason--for reason of defenses, for reason of lack of insight, for reason of overwhelming institutional pressures, for reason of lack of information--which contributes to our blindspots in working with adolescents, and most certainly, with disturbed adolescents.

My reaction to Bloom's paper is basically positive. I agree that it is time that this phenomena yielded to examination. Yet, I was hungry for Bloom to go further, to look beyond the symptoms which he so colorfully described and to lay open the causes. He began by strongly focusing in this direction but then seemed to back away. Therefore, in what follows, I will attempt to support the existence of this phenomena, suggest a single locus of this problem, explore the conflictual interaction between the needs of teachers and disturbed adolescents and comment on the adequacy of the suggested remedy.

The Effects are seen by Others

There seems to be little question that what Bloom describes exists: the conflicts, the reactions, the confusions. Others have attempted to organize these pressures and interpersonal responses in various ways. Long and Newman (1980) stated, "There is no one who does not have shutters in his mind that go down when a particularly threatening experience occurs." Such experiences are part of working with adolescent populations. My own organization of these effects (1979) noted primarily two reality conditions and two interpersonal processes, which were labeled "slippage of hope", "stacking of experience", "shifting of power", and "struggles for distance".

In describing the "slippage of hope" we were commenting upon the unspoken message which is sent to teachers of adolescent and other secondary handicapped youth. "For if it is believed that the chief hope lies in early programming, then does not hope lie with secondary programming? Are these students the "left overs", "the unresponsive to treatment" ones, the "too complex"? A student with a prolonged, persistent emotional problem certainly represents a more difficult educational challenge. This reality plus the permeating general attitude towards this population, of little or no hope, has significant effects upon a teacher's motivation with this population. Bloom addresses this effect when he describes the resultant: "anger at our teammates", "retreat into professional neutrality" and "paranoic sellout".

The many layers of experience which the student has accumulated by the time adolescence is reached, add further complexity to programming for this population. It is often taxing enough to untangle the various experiences and reactions of disturbed **children** in order to understand and plan for them. However, adolescents present an even more complex picture, due to their increased age and additional years of learning as well as their educational histories of both inspirational and disastrous schooling. In the area of education for the emotionally disturbed, we have done our share of adding to these complex layers of experience by swinging from one educational approach to another, from psychoanalytic, to behavioral, to ecological, with more swings to come. An adolescent who has received special educational services from childhood may have experienced several of these approaches and been affected differently by each of their underlying premises. If I have been led to believe that my problem lies in my developmental history, and then in my behavior, and then perhaps not within me at all but rather in my teacher's reactions to me, I may or may not enter energetically into the elimination of my problem. Teachers' reactions to this, plus the complexity of the period of adolescence itself, yield what Bloom calls "complexity shock". Efforts to make sense of educational programming in the face of this complexity lead to the "model mania", "success and the time warp" and "implementation despair" of which he writes.

Certainly, there is also a shifting of power, which results in the "helplessness rage" described by Bloom. Educators depend heavily upon their abilities to ultimately "pursuade", "convince", "make" youngsters

do what they feel or say, should be done. In the end, we know that in most cases, **children** will comply, or if worst comes to worst, we can physically gain compliance. An elementary aged youngster who loses control and is overcome with rage can be physically restrained when verbal means fail. Whereas, due to increased size and mobility, the adolescent can override our demands and can follow through on his/her own wishes. The external controls begin rapidly to lose their potency in upper elementary and junior high school. Too often, this normal developmental shift from the student relying upon the external controls of adults and the system, to reliance upon his/her own internal controls, has not been reinforced within the educational setting. Neither have new styles of influencing the adolescent person been practiced by the adults. The resultant is a sudden adult realization that they are indeed powerless to enforce their wills. For many youngsters also, there is a sudden realization that the adult is essentially powerless. They experience this new responsibility not with a self-fulfilling surge of confidence but rather with trepidation and fear. Many demand the external controls through more extreme behaviors. This phenomena exists in all work with adolescents but becomes exacerbated in work with disturbed adolescents, many of whom do not have the internal controls to draw upon even if they were so motivated.

Yes, it all seems to be there, and there is agreement with Bloom on the facets of this phenomena, the symptoms. Teaching adolescent disturbed students has many realities associated with it that yield multiple effects upon those who teach. Bloom identifies these effects as conflicts with youngsters, conflicts with systems and conflicts with selves.

A Single Locus to this Problem

To understand why this process engenders the depth of conflict which it apparently does, it seems necessary to go beyond Bloom's description and to look at the psychological process which is operating in this interaction between disturbed adolescents and adults. My own understanding of this phenomena is that it is not so much a "refusal to recognize the emotional impact students have upon us" as Bloom states, but rather an *inability* to separate out, to understand and to accept the many interactional responses which are set up between the adolescent student and the adult, and particularly, between the disturbed adolescent and the adult. It is the adult's inability to maintain cognition as a mediator between his/her reactions and his/her responses to these students which throws the teacher into conflict. The three conflict areas which Bloom identifies are really only one true area--conflict with selves.

Bloom states, "teaching disturbed adolescents triggers intense feelings from two sources, the emotionality and provocative behavior of pupils, and the personal needs of the teacher." There is no difference between these two sources. The emotionality and provocative behavior of the pupils would not trigger intense feelings with the adult if they didn't in some way "rub" against the needs of the teacher. It is the needs and behaviors of one party, the disturbed adolescent, rubbing against the needs and behaviors of the other, the adult, which provides for this dynamic phenomena. One locus of the problem exists, the self; it is the adult's struggles to manage his/her own responses in order to proceed with the problem solving of teaching.

These struggles are both affective and cognitive in nature. Wood (1979) feels that: "No other group arouses so strongly the contradictory impulse to punish as well as to heal." My own belief is that the struggles in us are affective in nature because massive reactivity is stimulated by the adolescent's normal developmental behaviors. The conflicts of adolescence are so close to many of our own developmental conflicts that reverberations are set up which cause us to react with defensive and sometimes even regressive behaviors.

These struggles also are of a cognitive nature, particularly in work with disturbed adolescents. The developmental and behavioral patterns are uneven, making them very difficult to understand. Fagen (1979) has identified "assessmen and programming" as one of the professional competencies necessary for teachers of emotionally disturbed for which the challenge is greater at the secondary level. A student whose size and social interactions lead one to believe that he is well into adolescent social patterns, but who exhibits impulse control and moral development which is many stages behind his "normal" peers, causes untold congitive dilemmas for the adult.

Conflictural Interaction of Adult and Adolescent Needs

Is there any reason to believe that in this phenomena there is more than the "refusal to recognize the emotional impact" which Bloom suggests? Is there something inherent in the nature of the adult and adolescent student needs which make this interaction potentially conflictual? In order to take a closer look at this phenomena we might examine the adult needs which have to be met in the teaching situation and the characteristics of the adolescent needs to which teachers must respond.

People enter the teaching profession for a variety of reasons. These reasons reflect personal and often unrecognized needs which may or may not enhance their abilities to perform the tasks which are associated with teaching. Long and Newman (1980) stated that: "The more aware a teacher is of the hidden, as well as the obvious reasons for teaching, the more fully will he be able to do his job and face its frustrations." Therefore, we might conclude that if teachers of disturbed adolescents experience prolonged frustrations, perhaps it is because their reasons for entering the teaching profession are continually being thwarted. Redl and Wattenberg (1959) listed the commonly stated reasons which people give for going into the teaching profession. (1.) status, (2.) family pressure, (3.) love for subject field, (4.) identification with a former teacher, (5.) love of children, (6.) fun in teaching, (7.) helping to build a better world, (8.) self-sacrifice for an ideal, (9.) correcting the shortcomings of one's own past, (10.) reliving childhood patterns, (11.) desire for affection, (12.) need for security, (13.) halfway house to other ambition, (14.) need for power and group leadership, and (15.) guaranteed superiority. Some of the adult needs which are reflected in this list seem most likely to be thwarted in work with adolescents.

The needs and behaviors of individuals who are going through the adolescent stages of development have been described by each of the developmental

theorists. Even if development has been relatively normal for a given student, teachers expect to see a wide range of social and affective behaviors.

Loevinger (1966) stated that: "interpersonal relations are manipulative and exploitive, but there is a marked shift away from dependence. Conscious preoccupation is with control and advantage, domination, deception, getting the better of and so on." As students move to the higher stages according to Loevinger, "rules are partially internalized. They are obeyed just because they are the rules." Reciprocal relationships begin to be possible but are reserved for a small in-group of people. At this higher stage, conscious preoccupation is with material things, with reputation and status, with appearance and with adjustment. Jurkovic and Selman (1980) describe the ways in which students become increasingly able to understand interpersonal relationships and to take another persons point of view as they move through these stages. At the early part of normal adolescent development, this is not possible. Students tend to see only their own part in an interaction, and understand only their own gain or loss.

These normal developmental characteristics require certain adult responses if the student's development is to progress uninterrupted. The importance of open communication and confortable, strong interpersonal relationships between adults and adolescents is stressed by Jones (1980). "Behavior interventions employed with adolescents must respond to adolescents' needs to: (1) experience a sense of significance, competence, and power; (2) experience a sense of structure and order; and (3) focus on current, concrete issues and behaviors." Because of the stages of development associated with adolescence, students need to clarify, test, order, organize, group and even at times reject social phenomena.

If the adult's own needs cause them to respond in ways which do not foster adolescent growth, conflict and frustration seem inevitable. For this reason, Fagen (1979) identified self-awareness and self-acceptance as a priority in professional competencies especially at the secondary level. Teachers with strong needs for status, power, group leadership or guaranteed superiority might easily be in conflict when teaching adolescents. It is around these areas that we frequently hear teachers express frustration with comments such as: "That boy shows no respect for authority." and "Those students think that they run the classroom." When aggression from a distraught youth turns into a physical attack upon an adult, the reaction of other adults is intense. The "rallying around" shows how serious an infraction and threat this behavior is to what the adults feel is important in that setting.

In a pre-adolescent class of emotionally disturbed boys, one of my students repeatedly demonstrated that he understood this adult need for power and authority. Whenever he was in an uncomfortable position with me, having to discuss uncomfortable feelings, or confronted by counter-productive behavior, he would search for the building principal, demonstrate a well known finger signal, and be promptly expelled from school. The signal meant only one thing to him, his exit from an unnerving situation. To the principal, however, it meant something entirely different--the affronting of her authority, the challenge of her power.

Teachers may also be thwarted in their work with adolescents if their needs in teaching center around love, acceptance and desire for affection. Adolescents need adult affection, but they are also struggling for independence from the influence and controls of the adult. In early adolescence, their behavior may vacillate between demanding assistance and rejecting it. Later they may test their independence through challenging and questioning the adult. The adult for whom love and acceptance are defined by student adoration or compliance will be frustrated indeed. Fagen (1979) identified as distinctive to the secondary level, the personal characteristic of "satisfaction from own efforts, independent of student liking".

The adult who has entered the teaching profession primarily to relive childhood patterns, or who either is not certain of his or her position on issues of discipline, fairness, and rules, or who is not secure enough to openly negotiate these positions, will probably be in conflict teaching disturbed adolescents. In junior high schools, teachers may be confronted with sexually provocative adolescent behaviors. Those adults who derive as much or more stimulation from such behaviors as do the disturbed students will find it particularly difficult when they must limit such behaviors or define their appropriateness in the school setting. Likewise, it is only slightly threatening to be accused of being unfair when you are certain that you have not been so, but when you are unsure of the intent and circumstances of your behavior, you behave in ways which add to the fears and angers of the adolescent and which demonstrate your defensiveness.

Summary Comments

The effects of disturbed adolescents upon their teachers are certainly many. Even though work with adolescents and work with disturbed children produces conflictual effects for many adults, the combination of disturbance and adolescence seems to magnify the effects. The teacher's emotions are more often, and more intensively, stimulated due to the rubs between the needs of the adolescent and those of the teacher. Defensive and regressive responses are more often possible because of this increased reactivity. Cognition as a mediator between reactions and responses is often more difficult to maintain due to the uneven and diverse developmental patterns of the disturbed adolescents, and the reality that implementation of an education plan is more difficult due to this diversity.

The remedy which Bloom suggests, "accepting special education's interpersonal underworld" is not enough to allow teachers to disengage from these unproductive conflicts. Much more attention needs to be given: 1) to the **selection** of teachers who have developed far enough in their own interpersonal histories as to be able to manage adolescent struggles without too much reverberation, 2) to the **training** of teachers to better understand their reactions and defenses in the face of adolescent behaviors, and 3) to the **supervision** of teachers so that they may gain sufficient knowledge of students' needs and patterns of responses to allow them to respond and not simply react; to fully enter into the problem solving process with this difficult population.

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Teachers Have Problems . . . Other Than Just Students

by
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Our initial reaction to Dr. Bloom's paper was simply, questioning. To whom is the paper addressed? We feel Dr. Bloom seems to be writing to teachers who have had little experience with disturbed adolescents. To what range of disturbed youngsters is Dr. Bloom referring? We read about negative, hostile, uncooperative students, but did not notice much about the overly positive, dependent, shy and withdrawn type which often appears in special classrooms. The paper prompted the feeling that the students we have been servicing for years were definitely "bad news". It seemed we had failed to draw the fine line between our experiences and theirs, and that we needed to do so immediately.

Our second reaction was, "Is it really this bad?" Fortunately for us, it is not and was not. In retrospect, we can vividly see in our first year of teaching, times of "Helplessness Rage" and "Paranoic Sellout". We were forever seeking assurance that what we were doing did not look like we did not know what we were doing. With an increase in the number of programs throughout the nation, there are still many new teachers looking for support and searching for some clear-cut methods to reap results. We are in agreement with Dr. Bloom that there is a great deal of emotional conflict involved when dealing with disturbed youth. Also, there is a definite need for acceptance of the interpersonal underworld of special education.

We identified several points which aroused opposing feelings. Teachers do experience a conflict between supporting the system and supporting the student; however, there appears to be a middle ground between "remaining reserved and detached" and "siding with the youngster". Anger at our teammates can be minimized, if not avoided, by keeping lines of communication open among staff and administrators. If key people have at least a basic knowledge of program goals and the types of students being serviced, counter productive measures might occur with much less frequency. With the involvement of all concerned, compassionate but firm limits can be established and appropriate consequences can be agreed upon. The same process of developing expectancies could occur on a much more detailed level between teacher and student to prevent the Catch-22 of being either an enemy or an easily-manipulated fool.

Another idea which stimulated mixed feelings is that of the primary needs of teachers with their students. To be liked by our pupils is certainly desirable. To be effective is extremely important--isn't that why we are in this field? To be in control of the student does not seem to be as intense a need. If we are effective in what we do, don't we hope to turn the controls over to the student? Maintaining basic classroom guidelines is essential in preventing chaos, true; but striving to control a student's behaviors might well lead to unnecessary frustration. Through the use of varying, and gradually less restrictive, management techniques, we strive to channel behavior in the proper direction. That is, hopefully, farther away from teacher control. It seems to us that the more we might seek to control our students, the more we open ourselves to "Helplessness Rage", "Envy of the Young", and "Complexity Shock".

Dr. Bloom emphasizes the needs of the teacher throughout his paper. We find ourselves wondering why teachers who have so many needs of their own would choose to be in a field with students who have even greater needs. Teachers of the emotionally disabled must develop an objective concern for their students, or be prepared to suffer the various emotional maladies expressed by Dr. Bloom. Those who may endeavor to meet their own needs by working with disturbed youth are headed for teacher burnout at a rapid pace.

We feel there is an area which this paper neglected to emphasize and one which needs to be expressed -- the ever-changing list of federal, state and local guidelines. As stated by Dr. Bloom, many frustrating situations are caused or could be encountered by the teacher when finding oneself caught between the system and the student. We interpret that to mean building policy and not the overall administration of special education. If Dr. Bloom were to examine the full impact that the latter has on the emotional state of the teacher, then the topic of this paper might be "The Advantages of a Nuclear Holocaust Over the Regulations of Special Education"!

The biggest conflict facing teachers of disturbed youth is not the idea of dealing with individual differences within the classroom, but having to contend with individual differences within and between state and federal guidelines. We have found that the youth we serve are well aware of "where we're coming from" when we make controversial decisions. The most annoying aspect of our teaching careers stems from the many changes made in programming, servicing, labelling and regulating. It seems many of these changes occur without involving the teachers who are responsible for implementing them.

Our "painful experiences of the past" do not compare with our painful experiences of the present. Our fears do not derive from the actual teaching atmosphere, but rather from the legalities involved. Our "not wanting to see a new day dawn" does not come from encountering a frustrating student; it stems from anticipating a new label, new form, or new rules exception. The pressures created by the complicated framework within which we are compelled to teach certainly compound the effects of disturbed adolescents on us.

Bloom Responds

I am delighted by the responses, as they represent the kind of thoughtfulness I hoped to trigger by my paper. Piersak and the Voorhees have placed my ideas within the realm of other practitioner concerns; Morse has exquisitely relabelled my concerns and gone on to look at intimately related phenomena; while Rezmierski has attempted to describe the complex etiology of adult-adolescent interpersonal transactions. The paper and responses taken collectively create a vivid picture of teachers' lives in classrooms for disturbed adolescents. In trying to reply to their responses, I recognize the same difficulty Rhodes described, in that paper-to-paper interactions between persons are not human dialogue and, therefore, responses and replies are likely to appear as products of disembodied typewriters rather than real persons. Nevertheless, I was persuaded to do this if for no other reason than to point out that five very different human beings with disparate careers and distinctly different patterns of interaction with disturbed adolescents and their teachers all concur that the interpersonal world of disturbed adolescents and their teachers is an overriding dimension of each and every program.

Piersak's response is simple and direct. Teachers must meet the needs of their students in a caring and accepting manner. It is impossible to disagree with this. The point is, however, that trying to accomplish this without considering the conflict of needs between teachers and pupils will only translate these lofty ideals into further fuel for teacher pain. Piersak has also suggested that teachers need to be predictable. I have always believed that successful teachers of adolescents deliberately attempt to not be predictable; that predictability becomes dullness, and that a certain amount of controlled insanity is useful. The predictability is in the constant nurturance and caring and not that the teacher will respond in the same manner to the same behavior for any and every child. As Long has said, "Fairness is treating children differently." Piersak has also suggested that there be no judging, no valuing, merely acceptance of adolescents. I am not certain what he means by this. Certainly we make judgements and impose values. That is the job. It's the knowing how and when, as Morse describes, that is so tough.

The Voorhees ask who are the appropriate targets of my remarks--all adults who work with disturbed adolescents. No one is immune from the vicissitudes of teaching adolescents. Especially given the lack of supervision in general, and supervision related to countertransference issues in particular, there is no reason to believe that length of service is related to better understanding of and more effective working with affective and interpersonal issues. In fact, one eyebrow instinctively goes up when they say that their biggest conflict is not dealing with individual differences in the classroom but with conflicting bureaucratic regulations. Though they and I would agree with Morse that the essence of helping adolescents may lie "buried under forms, rules, and rigamarole", I sense a good deal of "anger at our team mates" in their remarks. There is certainly no evidence that programs for disturbed children and youth are any less (or more) effective today than before the passage of PL 94-142. Paperwork is an onerous time consuming task which steals time away from direct service. But rather than viewing it as the bogey man, whose death would magically eliminate the difficulties of teaching disturbed adolescents, it must be viewed as one more reality stress the teacher must master.

"Cognition as a mediator" between one's reactions and one's responses--how succinctly Rezmierski has depicted the essence of the education of disturbed adolescents. Not only must teachers cognitively consider their affective responses to pupils as part of the data to use in consciously determining how to intervene with a child, but that is, of course, what we want our students to learn. "Think before you act!" It is the modern day evolution of Freud's concern that "where Id was, Ego shall be". Disturbed children can (must?) be taught to control their behavior by thought. And it is only when we have helped children develop cognitive mediators that we can have any realistic expectation that their newly learned behaviors will generalize. Rezmierski identifies failure and inability to recognize the emotional impact students have upon us, rather than refusal, as a major source of teacher-pupil conflict. In as much as teachers do not consider their own thoughts, feelings, and behavior as instructionally germane she is correct. But, I used the word "refusal" deliberately. Special education today is married to a management-by-objectives mentality in which quick behavioral change is reified. The locus of disorder is typically seen as lying within the child and in need of surgical exorcism. The whole field seems caught up in a "success and the time warp" trap. In teacher training, we commit very few resources to interpersonal issues and public school programs commit almost none at all. The issue is resistance, a prevailing refusal to consider teacher affect a legitimate issue in educating disturbed adolescents. There is a widespread institutionalization of what Morse has called "the peculiar contemporary tendency to underestimate the significance of interpersonal relationships." I understand Rezmierski's call for paying closer attention to selection, training, and supervision of teachers as a request for institutional recognition of the importance of interpersonal relationships in special education.

Several of Morse's ideas have served as touchstones for this reply. Here I would like to focus directly on but one of the issues he surfaces. He helps differentiate personal business from reality issues when he says ". . . the adolescent is playing for keeps. Not all of our reaction to their behavior is countertransference . . ." Morse then goes on to describe drug abuse and chicken games in poignant human terms. Poetically, then, he counterpoints these very real and tragic concerns with the upside of adolescent life. It is appropriate to be saddened and angered by "circuits" blown by drugs and lives impaired or ended by car games. But it is a personal

problem to feel the same anger when a kid is dirty, curses us out, or refuses to follow our directions. It is only too human to delight in the "caring, ebullience, concern for causes, forthrightness, and straight thinking" that typifies adolescence. It is inappropriate to fail to consider fun and joy as legitimate purposes of special education for disturbed adolescents.

There is so much more one could say. So many good ideas brought forth by the respondents -- and so little space. I would like to conclude, typewriter interuptus, by thanking Carl Smith for allowing me to bring this topic to your attention. Also I want to thank the respondents for their time, energy, and thoughtfulness. Perhaps we have provided some ideas to help understand and limit the effects disturbed adolescents have upon their teachers.

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